



News Release

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New Anti-Tobacco Commercials Target Utah Hispanics *Ads Show Harsh Realities of Smoking, Reasons to Quit*

SALT LAKE CITY – A new series of television, radio, and print ads targeting Utah’s growing Hispanic/Latino population shed harsh light on the risks and realities of tobacco. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) ads depict the lives of Hispanic/Latino Utahns who are either trying to quit or are impacted by smoking.

Shot in a gritty documentary style, the television commercials follow the real-life experiences of 25-year-old Margarita Gage, a University of Utah student who began smoking at age 13, 58-year-old Ed Distel, a successful businessman and on-and-off smoker, Jose Carlos Villalpando, a 45-year-old cement worker with a 30-year habit, and self-employed mother Zulma Pinero who’s been smoking since age 15.

By seeing or listening to these people in candid and revealing situations, viewers are given insights into the toll tobacco is taking on their lives, their families, their health and their pocketbooks. The UDOH Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (TPCP) believes featuring Hispanic/Latino subjects speaking Spanish (the spots are subtitled in English) will further the ads’ influence in the Hispanic/Latino community.

“Our work with leaders in the Hispanic community has shown that, despite our efforts, tobacco use is still high,” said Lena Dibble of the TPCP. “We also know there are cultural barriers within the Latino community that make it harder to quit,” said Dibble. “This campaign is a concerted effort to address those issues head on, and give the community stop-smoking information and help for those who want to quit.”

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Dibble said the campaign emphasizes the health and social benefits of quitting smoking, as well as the positive example it sets for family members.

“We want to get to people before they start using tobacco, obviously,” Dibble said. “But once someone is addicted, there are still many incentives to quit, including saving money and getting healthier” she said. “The department wants Latinos to know we’re ready to help whenever they’re ready to quit.”

The campaign debuted on Utah television, radio, and print outlets like Telemundo, Univision, Bustos Radio, and Mundo Hispano in mid-November. Aimed at Utah’s Hispanic population, the Spanish-language commercials encourage viewers to call the Spanish Quit Line (1-877-629-1585) to get help giving up tobacco.

While the commercials are currently in rotation as 30-second television spots, a number of the subjects and stories have also been assembled into a half-hour documentary that will explore the challenges and successes of quitting. The program will debut early next year.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.